

# 2011

## Assuring the Future of Nebraska's Cultural Heritage Collections: a Statewide Plan

Prepared by the  
Nebraska 2011  
Connecting to  
Collections Planning  
Committee

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## Executive Summary:

In 2007, the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) initiated the Connecting to Collections program, which provided funding for each state to bring together representatives from organizations interested in and responsible for managing and caring for cultural collections, including archives, historical societies, libraries and museums. In 2010, the Nebraska State Historical Society (NSHS) was awarded a \$40,000 Connecting to Collections planning grant that would address the question **What do Nebraska's museums, libraries, and archives need to do to be responsible stewards of the state's collections?**

*To answer this challenging question the NSHS and the Connecting to Collections Planning Committee held a series of meetings across Nebraska. The first was a statewide meeting which developed an initial draft plan including statewide preservation goals.<sup>1</sup> This meeting was followed by four regional meetings where the plan was reviewed and additional data was gathered. More than 63 individuals from 40 organizations participated in the five meetings, ranging in size and scope, all shared an equal commitment to maintaining Nebraska's cultural resources and for providing access to these resources to the respective communities.*

The resulting goals and activities were informed by a statewide survey of Nebraska organizations preservation activities and needs. In addition to the broad question, the participants were also asked:

- How do we involve the greatest number of institutions?
- Based on survey results, how do we address the key collection care issues in the most cost effective manner?
- How do we make the resources available to the greatest number of Nebraska institutions?
- What specific actions need to be taken in what priority?
- Who needs to be involved to make this happen?

The priorities, goals, and activities itemized on the following pages will provide a roadmap for improved care of items important to Nebraska.

More information on the project, including the analysis of past surveys, statewide survey report, regional meeting report, and resources on collection care can be found at [www.nebraskahistory.org/connect](http://www.nebraskahistory.org/connect). For additional information please contact Lynne Ireland, Nebraska State Historical Society via email at [lynne.ireland@nebraska.gov](mailto:lynne.ireland@nebraska.gov) or by phone at 402-471-4758.

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<sup>1</sup> Statewide meeting participants included: Deb Arenz, Nebraska History Museum and Elkhorn Valley Museum; Scott Childers, Nebraska Library Association; Mary Ellen Ducey, UNL Archives/Special Collections; Beth Goble, Nebraska Library Commission; Martha Grenzeback, Omaha Public Libraries; Karen Keehr, Nebraska State Historical Society and Stuhr Museum; Gayla Koerting, State Archives, Nebraska State Historical Society; Deb Long, Nebraska State Historical Society's Gerald R. Ford Conservation Center; Meredith McGowan, Lincoln City Libraries; Jennifer Murrish, Buffalo County Historical Society/Trails and Rails Museum; Erin Houser, Saunders County Historical Society; Terri Rabun, Nebraska United Methodist Conference Archives; Jeremy Steele, Larsen Tractor Testing Museum; Mary Yager, Nebraska Humanities Council; consultants Tom Clareson and Liz Bishoff

## Goals and Activities

Goal 1: Provide the residents of Nebraska access to the digital collections and digital projects of Nebraska's cultural heritage organizations through a single search portal.

Activities:

- Establish a working group representing Nebraska cultural heritage organizations to develop a single search portal for digital collections and digital projects
- Conduct a survey of Nebraska collections
- Develop a strategy for implementing and maintaining the single search portal and its content, including software that will support the portal, who will operate the portal, how the collections will be collected, etc.
- Work with the standards committee on the metadata structure that will be implemented in the portal
- Identify incentives for contributing to the portal
- Identify funding for the portal's creation and maintenance

Goal 2: Create among all Nebraska's cultural heritage organizations a culture of sharing of resources.

Activities:

- Host a meeting of Nebraska cultural heritage organizations to see what they want to share
- Identify a coordinating group or organization to lead a project to promote the culture of sharing resources
- Develop a method framework/mechanisms for sharing resources among Nebraska's cultural heritage organizations
- Link cultural heritage organization to resources, such as templates
- Support a buddy system for disaster planning
- Create/identify helpful web pages to support professional association web pages
- Support Nebraska Library Association (NLA)/Nebraska Museum Association (NMA) collection care activities
- Identify funding for these activities

Goal 3: To assure the broadest quality of care for Nebraska's collections by Nebraska's cultural heritage organizations, establish statewide standards and best practices for Nebraska's cultural heritage organizations, based on national standards

Activities:

- Identify specific areas where standards and best practices might be established
- Establish one or more statewide task forces to guide the development/adoption of statewide standards/best practices in the specific areas
- Task Forces should report their activity on a regular basis, including open review and approval

- Work with a training task force (See Goals 4 and 6) to train the cultural heritage community in the use of the standards/best practices

Goal 4: Expand the capacity of Nebraska’s cultural heritage staff, management, volunteers and stakeholders to support, develop and maintain their collections, by developing and implementing a statewide training program.

Activities:

- Establish a statewide training task force that is representative of the cultural heritage community to develop the training strategy
- Review the 2010 Statewide Survey and the Analysis of past surveys to identify critical training needs
- Establish a statewide training program, Husker Heritage Heroes, that is a certified training program. This program would be for staff and volunteers.
- Design a Basic Training for Collections Curriculum, including incentives for training and funding strategy
- Explore development of a Nebraska based mentor program
- Create a task force that will develop a strategy for supporting the needs of cultural heritage organizations use of volunteers
- Develop a volunteer handbook with forms and templates that can be adapted to institutions
- Create a position of statewide volunteer coordinator
- So that greater use of volunteers can be made in collection care, develop training geared toward volunteers
- Explore strategies for how cultural heritage organizations can work with colleges and their student interns
- Develop a program that incorporates use of the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) StEPS-Standards and Excellence Program for History Organizations<sup>2</sup> strategy including purchasing a number of AASLH “StEPS” packets/memberships for participants
- Develop a means of evaluating the training program, such as developing a tracking map to show growth of organizations that have completed assessments, completed StEPS program, etc.
- Develop a strategy for funding these activities

Goal 5: Provide a cost effective solution for access to and storage of digital collections for Nebraska cultural heritage organizations using contemporary technology

Activities:

- Create a task force representing the Nebraska cultural heritage organizations to identify appropriate metadata standards to support access to Nebraska digital collections

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<sup>2</sup> A voluntary assessment program for small- and mid-sized history organizations created by AASLH with funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services. <http://www.aaslh.org/steps.htm>

- Create a task force representing the Nebraska cultural heritage organizations to select a hosting solution for Nebraska digital collections, including issues such as technology platform and administration
- Develop a funding strategy for the program
- Provide access to the digital collections through the statewide search portal
- Explore options for discounted price for PastPerfect software for museums that don't currently have a collection management system. The Nebraska Museums Association (NMA) may be able to arrange this
- Offer overview sessions/introductory training on PastPerfect (<http://www.museumsoftware.com/>) software for organizations that aren't familiar with the package.
- Explore options for helping museums get content online
- Explore options for shared computer space for digital content and backup

Goal 6: Support the educational and information needs of Nebraska cultural heritage staff, management and volunteers through expanded use of social networking technology by the Nebraska professional associations

Activities:

- Add links to Nebraska Library Commission's *Nebraska Access* to Nebraska Museums Association website and Nebraska Library Association (NLA) website, providing access to digital collections
- Working with the webmasters at NLA and NMA create web pages or links for collection care/preservation resources, including assessment grants (IMLS Conservation Assessment Grant Program<sup>3</sup>, American Association of Museum's Museum Assessment Program<sup>4</sup>, National Endowment for the Humanities Preservation Assistance Grants (<http://www.neh.gov/grants/guidelines/pag.html>), etc.)
- Promote benefits of collection care through testimonials
- Link to volunteer handbook
- Progress tracking maps available on websites

Goal 7: Expand the commitment to collection care in Nebraska

Activities

- Analyze the 2010 Nebraska survey results identifying organizations that who have an urgent need for assessment and those than require assessment in next 3 years

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<sup>3</sup> The Conservation Assessment Program (CAP) is supported through a cooperative agreement between IMLS and Heritage Preservation. Through CAP, professional conservators identify conservation priorities by spending two days at your location and three days writing a report about your museum's collection, environmental conditions, and site. The report can help your museum develop strategies for improving collections care and provide a tool for long-range planning and fund-raising. (<http://www.imls.gov/applicants/grants/conservAssessment.shtm>)

<sup>4</sup> The AAM Museum Assessment Program (MAP) helps museums maintain and improve operations through a confidential, consultative process. AAM provides guidance in meeting priorities and goals and understanding how the museum compares to standards and best practices. (<http://www.aam-us.org/museumresources/map/index.cfm>)

- Identify through review of past surveys who those organizations that have completed an assessment and disaster plans
- Promote availability of CAP assessments for museums and NEH Preservation Assistance Grants for libraries supporting assessments.
- Review survey results to identify the need for promotion of advocacy for trustees and support groups
- Develop promotional materials for Library and Museum trustees regarding collection care
- Identify availability of existing advocacy tool kit or develop a tool kit for educational programs for museum and library staff
- Conduct library and museum trustee presentation at annual conference or other appropriate venue
- Increase awareness of existing cultural heritage and preservation advocacy materials on the NSHS website for all collecting organizations
- Provide training in advocacy for trustees, board members and friends groups, as well as staff.
- Identify the key messages—what is the problem?

**Appendix A—  
Nebraska Connecting to Collections Statewide Planning Meeting  
November 8-9, 2010  
Top Priorities**

At the November 8-9, 2010 Nebraska Connecting to Collections Statewide Planning Meeting the participants identified through a facilitated group planning process the following priorities for collection care at Nebraska's collecting organizations. During the same session, the attendees identified the issues/opportunities and specific activities to address each opportunity, this list can be found in Appendix B. Appendix C provides a list of all the recommendations.

Top Priorities: The following are the top collection care priorities as identified at the statewide planning meeting in priority order.<sup>5</sup>

- To provide the residents of Nebraska access to the digital collections and digital projects of Nebraska's cultural heritage organizations through a single search portal.
- To create among all Nebraska's cultural heritage organizations a culture of sharing of resources.
- To assure the broadest quality of care for Nebraska's collections by Nebraska's cultural heritage organizations, establish statewide standards and best practices for Nebraska's cultural heritage organizations, based on national standards
- To expand the capacity of Nebraska's cultural heritage staff, management, volunteers and stakeholders to support, develop and maintain their collections, by developing and implementing a statewide training program
- To provide a cost effective solution to access and storage of digital collections for Nebraska cultural heritage organizations using contemporary technology
- To support the educational and information needs of Nebraska cultural heritage staff, management and volunteers through expanded use of social networking technology by the Nebraska professional associations.
- To expand the commitment to collection care in Nebraska

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<sup>5</sup> These priorities were converted into goals statements following the meeting.



## **Appendix B— Nebraska Connecting to Collections statewide meeting day one draft report**

During the small group session, the participants discussed the opportunity that would address the issue. A summary of the discussion is included under each issue/opportunity, along with specific recommendations to address the issue/opportunity. The following are the reports submitted by each small group.

### **Issue/Opportunity:**

Improving access to collections: Improving access to items/materials through collection management via standards, with engaged and trained staff and volunteers

- Improving access to items/materials through collection management via standards, with engaged and trained volunteers and staff through collaboration
- Statewide standards for metadata using software that is flexible and in-tune with financial and expertise resources of institution – standards driven by NSHS, NLC, etc., leading statewide standards for collection information. Use processes and standards already in place, such as the AASLH Steps Program
- Get volunteers -- through standard agreements that outline their commitment level, time, and interests so the person and institution are on same page
- Institutional commitment through outlining what is needed from volunteers, how to keep them engaged, how any task they do leads to the greater goal, learn to use talent and interests for best collection management, and remember diplomacy and communication

### **Recommendations:**

- Husker Heritage Heroes – come to save the day - branded as a statewide training program that leads to certified, cohesive group of volunteers with incentives, motivation, identified by t-shirts, etc
- Statewide volunteer handbook with forms and template that can be adapted to institutions with a volunteer coordinator. (4)
- Statewide training in person or via technology that provides basic tools or that may be tied to a volunteer/staff interest in subject or media – museum docent model- that could be shadowing in an institution or via cross training
- Leads to possibilities for tourism experience, volunteer at a destination
- Bridging the mentality of “our stuff” to it being “Nebraska stuff,” distances, better and less alienating communication based on perceptions. (2)
- Common goal, everyone on board through standards, creation of new advocates and understanding, process comes through volunteers and not top down, strive for excellence and achievement on many levels,
- Overall: improved volunteer processes, collection management, access to statewide collections, and preservation

Disaster planning: Make staff and volunteers in Nebraska heritage & cultural organizations aware of resources available to create a disaster plan and advocate for them to create a plan for their organization.

Discussion Summary: The 2010 Nebraska Statewide Preservation Survey found that 52% of organizations did not have a disaster plan. Support a strategy of “Do a plan before you have a disaster!” Group mentioned that plans came in all sizes from the NEDCC’s *D-Plan* that can span multiple pages, or the single page CoSA *PREP* template that people can fold up and put in their wallet. Also discussed connecting the websites and messages of groups to get out of silos and so people can find the resources easily. One size does not fit all. Encourage people to not worry about doing a full blown detailed plan. Don’t wait, start now. Do a little at a time.

Samples of plans may reside at NLC and NMA. Important message – it can be easy to get started. Maybe some sort of formal training that includes disaster planning. Stop reacting, start pro-acting.

Recommendations:

- Link cultural and heritage organizations to disaster plan samples and templates for organizations of different sizes
- Consider a “buddy system” for disaster planning, linking people at institutions that already have plans to those just starting
- Review D-Plan at nedcc.org; the CoSA PREP plan (Council of State Archivists [statearchivists.org](http://statearchivists.org)); [Savingtreasures.org](http://Savingtreasures.org); COOL (Conservation Online) as potential Nebraska tools
- The cultural and heritage organizations that have outreach to members/friends groups should advocate having a disaster plan, with the messages that it can be small and easy, using webinars, publications, email and social media.
- Look at professional organization websites not mentioned here.
- Use the survey results to encourage organizations need to do this (Heritage health index and recent statewide results)

Museum Resource and Information Sharing: Nebraska museums do not share ideas about what they’re doing (beyond publicizing events). We need to promote a culture of resource sharing.

Discussion: Discussed various issues regarding the sharing, and/or lack thereof, of information and resources among Nebraska museums.

Recommendations:

- Find or coordinate a group/organization to lead a project to promote the notion of a culture of resource sharing and then develop a method to do so (framework/mechanisms) (7)
- Convene a meeting of Nebraska museums to see what they can and are willing to share and what resources would be needed to participate in a statewide resource sharing project
- Museum circuit riders who would go to Nebraska museums to assist in preservation efforts and share information

- Create or identify web pages with support organizations and information and publicize it
  - Work to create a statewide museum collections portal online
- Support Nebraska Museums Association in their efforts to connect Nebraska cultural institutions
  - Meetings
  - Websites
  - Social Networking sites
  - Workshops
  - Discounts on preservation supplies

### Building Awareness of Preservation Information within the cultural heritage community

Summary: Nebraska cultural organizations need fundamental preservation information and funding without fear or intimidation. How can we build awareness of available preservation resources? Need to encourage small institutions to use existing resources and use implementation grant to develop new resources.

#### Recommendations:

- Encourage all Nebraska museums to get CAP assessments (3)
- Encourage Nebraska libraries to get NEH preservation assistance grants (PAGs) (1)
- Encourage development of NMA and NLA websites to provide more useful and user friendly information. (3)
- Use websites to promote the benefits of CAP or PAG through the use of “testimonials” from those who have done them
- Peer to peer advocacy of above programs
- Establish “Husker Heritage” peer assessment program to do “pre-CAPs”/library assessments and encourage self assessments (2)
- Get more detailed input from those with needs

### Dealing with Digital

Summary: What are some directions we should take to increase access and creation of the digital projects our organizations make? When we look at digital preservation we need to look long term, at assets born digital or created from analog sources, and what standards there are for preservation and access. Nobody has money, resources, or staff. Some are scared of the concept of digital or unsure of the expectations. Sometimes it is hard to prioritize what gets digitized when there’s so much to do. There is a challenge to get agreement on best practices. We recognize that people have local standards that fit their community well. We would like to see a common search. Back to cloud computing – who pays? Perhaps a combination of Nebraska State Historical Society & Nebraska Library Commission? Grant funding? We need to start making some leaps of faith. When deciding what to digitize – look at would be the greatest loss, what is not replaceable anywhere else? How do we get people to agree to standards? If they follow the

standards – they can use the statewide cloud storage, thereby reducing local costs. Plus if they follow standards, their content can be found which means greater recognition for the institution. It was suggested we focus on metadata standards first, and then worry about the file formats. Use of the digital objects could help determine the file format standards. Then storage needs and all that leads to increased preservation and access. The statewide search would still allow local branding, if the organization chooses to have their own. This would also include digital representations of actual objects. This leads to less manipulation of the object, yet increased exposure of that part of an organization's collection. This could become integral in collection management. "Preservation and presenting the cultural artifacts of Nebraska"  
"This is your state ... We just digitize it." (Can replace digitize with preserve/protect/curate/steward, etc.)

#### Recommendations:

- A statewide cloud storage solution, perhaps funded by a joint effort of various organizations, to help offset local storage costs. To use the cloud storage space, the participating organization must use metadata standards set by the next recommendation
- Suggest a taskforce with similar representation to the planning group of today's meeting that would create metadata standards starting with Dublin Core as a base. Find ability would be the main priority
- Advertise to the cultural and heritage organizations, as well as the citizens of the state.
- A statewide search interface that can access digital projects and return results from across the various projects in the state. The digital objects don't necessarily have to reside in a statewide repository, just be findable from the search portal.

#### Using Available Collections Care Resources

Summary: Many Nebraska museums, libraries, and archives don't know about/use/take advantage of collection care resources that are available. Resources which are available include AASLH/STEPS, the Nebraska Saving Treasures Website, How to Write a Disaster Preparedness Plan, equipment owned by Nebraska Museums Association for loan to organizations for environmental monitoring, and training workshops available on-site or online. Training workshops are needed, but there are uneven training standards.

Once trained, staff and volunteers from organizations could serve as "deputies" to assist others with access to information and suggestions for implementation.

#### Recommendations:

- Develop a working group to determine what individuals/entities to:
  - Identify resources – Don't reinvent the wheel. Develop a mentoring program/peer network
  - Make training sequential and build skills
  - Create consensus among collectors (museums, libraries, and archives) about what standards should be for various applications—ex: scanning standards required to allow online access of photographs vs. standards needed to create digital surrogate

- Figure out how to promote access to and dissemination of the available resource information, both electronic and person-to-person
- Figure out how to actually get people to do it, to implement learning and improve collections care
- Identify how this might be funded, because volunteer-only efforts have been less effectual.

### Education/Training:

Summary: Nebraska needs basic preservation/collection management training for staff and volunteers, cross training for common vision and enhanced training for emerging professionals. Is certification for collections management needed? The libraries and archives have certifications, but how are certified individuals utilized or equipped. The bottom line is leaders need to be empowered and confident to revitalize their organization, motivate staff towards achieving standards in collections management.

### Recommendations:

- Celebrate Success Adopt recognized standards statewide
  - E.G.StEPs Collections Stewardship?
    - Basic
    - Better
    - Good
- Develop Basic Training
  - Shadow staff at other institutions
  - Gain access to information
  - Funding for opportunities
  - Incentives for training
- Establish Cross Training Program
  - Create a shared vision within the institution
  - Bring in outside perspectives
    - Expert swap
- Develop Enhanced Training
  - Utilize Emerging professionals empowering them to revitalize their organization and motivate staff towards common vision.
  - Annual awards for achieving standards

### Advocacy for preservation of collections:

Summary: Governments used to place value in and support maintenance of historical artifacts and collections. Today many governments have moved to conducting business online, providing access to government resources via the online document. As a result, support of the historic artifact and collection is giving way to its digital counterpart. Governments are unwilling to spend money maintaining historical collections, especially if an object has been digitized.

The reality is that both the analog and the digital collections need to be preserved for future use. Cultural heritage organizations need the support of government to assure long term access to both legacy collections as well as the born digital.

Governments and non-curating bodies do not have the same attitude about preservation and conservation that museums and libraries do. For them, if something is digitized, nothing more needs to be done, and the original physical artifacts do not necessarily need to be retained. It is important to make a distinction between born digital and digitally reformatted. These resources cannot always be treated the same.

We need to promote awareness that digitizing content doesn't relieve us of responsibility of preserving the analog object. Digitization of content is not more important than preservation of the actual artifact. We need to promote awareness of that fact.

Cultural heritage organizations need to develop a strategy of how to convince governments of the importance of this fact. Need to first convince the constituents (the voters). Key to the effort may be to make a clear link between collection preservation and education, economic development, tourism, etc. If it has economic impact they are more likely to fund it. We have to preserve the born digital, digital surrogates, and physical artifacts.

#### Recommendations:

- Institutions should collaborate to advocate for preservation of legacy collections
- Professional organizations need to incorporate preservation into their legislative agenda and include the message during discussion on legislative day activities
- Create a coalition of professionals, providing a vehicle for smaller organizations, who may not participate in professional associations, to join
- Advocate strong records management principles and practices as a means of defining essential records for local organizations, creating a way of avoiding key content of being discarded
- Provide access to statewide resources held by record creators in non-curating bodies, through a statewide database which may help prevent non-curating bodies from discarding historically important artifacts
- Advocate strong records management principles and practices as a means of defining essential individual and community organizations collections, creating a way to avoid key content from being discarded

#### Encouraging Long Range Preservation Plans

Summary: Fifteen (15) Nebraska cultural heritage organizations indicated in the 2010 survey an urgent need for a preservation assessment, while 72 institutions indicated a need for an assessment in the next several years. Provide organizations with guidance on available resources and guidance on how to use existing resources and develop new resources as required that will provide step by step information on long range preservation planning.

Recommendations:

- Encourage the use of AASLH “StEPS” Program, “Saving America’s Treasures” website; NMA and NLA meetings, regional professional meetings – Mountain Plains Museum Association, Mountain Plains Library Association
- Consider buying a certain number of AASLH “StEPS” packets/memberships
- Develop a map to track institutional progress in terms of assessments, development of long range plans, memberships in local professional organizations.
  - Use map to help identify peer/mentor partnerships
  - Put all of this information on the NMA and NLA websites
- Do follow-ups with those organizations that have already had assessments, checking on progress (1)
- Collecting contact information of the cultural institutions to promote communication

Other issues: Advocacy—External Organizations

- Advocate strong records management principles & practices as a means of defining essential individual and community organization collections, creating a way to avoid key content from being discarded

## **Appendix C— Nebraska Connecting to Collection statewide meeting list of recommendations**

**NB: Number following some recommendations reflect the votes received by the recommendation during the priority setting activity.**

- Husker Heritage Heroes – come to save the day - branded as a statewide training program that leads to certified, cohesive group of volunteers with incentives, motivation, identified by t-shirts, etc.
- Statewide volunteer handbook with forms and template that can be adapted to institutions with a volunteer coordinator
- Statewide training in person or via technology that provides basic tools or that may be tied to a volunteer/staff interest in subject or media – museum docent model- that could be shadowing in an institution or via cross training
- Leads to possibilities for tourism experience, volunteer at a destination
- Bridging the mentality of “our stuff” to it being “Nebraska stuff,” distances, better and less alienating communication based on perceptions
- Common goal, everyone on board through standards, creation of new advocates and understanding, process comes through volunteers and not top down, strive for excellence and achievement on many levels. Overall: improved volunteer processes, collection management, access to statewide collections, and preservation
- Link cultural and heritage organizations to disaster plan samples and templates for organizations of different sizes. (2)
- Consider a “buddy system” for disaster planning, linking people at institutions that already have plans to those just starting. (1)
- Review Northeast Document Conservation Center’s D-Plan ([nedcc.org](http://nedcc.org)); the Council of State Archivist PREP plan ([statearchivists.org](http://statearchivists.org)); NSHS, [Savingtreasures.org](http://Savingtreasures.org); COOL (Conservation Online) as potential Nebraska tools.
- The cultural and heritage organizations that have outreach to members/friends groups should advocate having a disaster plan, with the messages that it can be small and easy, using webinars, publications, email and social media.
- Look at professional organization websites not mentioned here.
- Use the Heritage Health Index and Nebraska 2010 survey results to encourage organizations need to do collection care. (3)
- Find or coordinate a group/organization to lead a project to promote the notion of a culture of resource sharing and then develop a method to do so (framework/mechanisms) (7)
- Convene a meeting of Nebraska museums to see what they can and are willing to share and what resources would be needed to participate in a statewide resource sharing project.
- Museum circuit riders who would go to Nebraska museums to assist in preservation efforts and share information
- Create or identify web pages with support organizations and information and publicize it.
  - Work to create a statewide museum collections portal online
- Support Nebraska Museums Association in their efforts to connect NE. cultural institutions
  - Meetings
  - Websites



- Social Networking sites
  - Workshops
- Discounts on preservation supplies
- Encourage all Nebraska museums to get CAP assessments (3)
- Encourage Nebraska libraries to get NEH Preservation Assistance Grants (PAGs) (1)
- Encourage development of NMA and NLA websites to provide more useful and user friendly information. (4)
- Use websites to promote the benefits of CAP or PAG through the use of “testimonials” from those who have done them
- Peer to peer advocacy of above programs
- A statewide cloud storage solution, perhaps funded by a joint effort of various organizations, to help offset local storage costs. To use the cloud storage space, the participating organization must use metadata standards set by the next recommendation. (4)
- Suggest a taskforce with similar representation to the planning group of today’s meeting that would create metadata standards starting with Dublin Core as a base. Find ability would be the main priority
- Advertise to the cultural and heritage organizations, as well as the citizens of the state.
- A statewide search interface that can access digital projects and return results from across the various projects in the state. The digital objects don’t necessarily have to reside in a statewide repository – just be findable from the search portal. (8)
- Identify resources – Don’t reinvent the wheel
- Develop a mentoring program/peer network. (6)
  - Make training sequential and build skills
  - Create consensus among collectors (museums, libraries, and archives) about what standards should be for various applications—ex: scanning standards required to allow online access of photographs vs. standards needed to create digital surrogate
- Figure out how to promote access to and dissemination of the available resource information, both electronic and person-to-person (1)
- Figure out how to actually get people to do it, to implement learning and improve collections care
- Identify how this might be funded, because volunteer-only efforts have been less effectual.
- Celebrate Success
- Adopt recognized standards statewide such those created by AASLH, NSHS, and other national association appropriate to the subject area.(5 & 2)
  - E.G.StEPs Collections Stewardship?
    - Basic
    - Better
    - Good
- Develop Basic Training (4)
  - Shadow staff at other institutions
  - Gain access to information
  - Funding for opportunities
  - Incentives for training
- Establish Cross Training Program
  - Create a shared vision within the institution

- Bring in outside perspectives
    - Expert swap
- Develop Enhanced Training
- Utilize Emerging professionals empowering them to revitalize their organization and motivate staff towards common vision.
- Annual awards for achieving standards
- Institutions should collaborate to advocate for preservation of legacy collections
- Professional organization need to incorporate preservation into their legislative agenda and include the message during discussion on legislative day activities
- Create a coalition of professionals, providing a vehicle for smaller organizations, who may not participate in professional associations, to join. (2)
- Advocate strong records management principles and practices as a means of defining essential records for local organizations, creating a way of avoiding key content of being discarded.
- Provide access to statewide resources held by record creators in non-curating bodies, through a statewide database which may help prevent non-curating bodies from discarding historically important artifacts. (1)
- Advocate strong records management principles and practices as a means of defining essential individual and community organizations collections, creating a way to avoid key content from being discarded. (1)
- Encourage the use of AASLH “StEPS” Program, “Save America’s Treasures Program” website; NMA and NLA meetings, regional professional meetings – MPMA, MPLA (2)
- Consider buying a certain number of AASLH “StEPS” packets/memberships (3)
- Develop a map to track institutional progress in terms of assessments, development of long range plans, memberships in local professional organizations (2)
- Use map to help identify peer/mentor partnerships
- Put all of this information on the NMA and NLA websites
- Do follow-ups with those organizations that have already had assessments, checking on progress (1)
- Collecting contact information of the cultural institutions to promote communication

## **Appendix D— Connecting to Collections Regional Meetings--Trends and Conclusions**

### Trends from the regions:

- **Awareness & Advocacy:** In all regions, advocacy assistance was needed.
  - Increase awareness of existing cultural heritage and preservation advocacy materials on the NSHS website for all collecting organizations
  - Provide training in advocacy for trustees, board members and friends groups, as well as staff; Developing tools to make a persuasive argument to management, Board, or city government. Participants said they need skills that allow them to convey the urgency of the problem.
  - Identify key messages—what is the problem?
  - Identify new programs [for outreach], such as information tables at the Nebraska Book Fair, local county fairs, etc.
  - Advocacy should be a collaborative effort, rather than done on an institution by institution basis
- **Staffing:** Use of volunteers was mentioned in all regions; however, issues with using volunteers varied across the regions
  - Aging population is impacting the volunteer pool. Some communities are seeing their volunteers retire, and recruiting new volunteers is a challenge. Others are finding that volunteers aren't appropriate for the collection care work.
  - Collection care work requires more training than many institutions can provide volunteers, so a statewide training initiative would be required to use volunteers.
  - Some organizations used student interns; however, rural areas found that building the ongoing relationship to support the student intern was time consuming and the outcome often wasn't worth the effort. Students were hard to recruit, as the museums couldn't provide a salary, which the students expected. Where it was successful, the organizations had favorable results.
- **Access:** The participants had a number of excellent suggestions to increasing access to Nebraska collections.
  - Explore options for discounted price for PastPerfect software for museums that don't currently have a collection management system. The Nebraska Museums Association may be able to arrange this.
  - Offer overview sessions/introductory training on PastPerfect software for organizations that aren't familiar with the package
  - Help museums get content online
  - Shared computer space for digital content and backup
  - Be open—organizations need to make a greater effort to be open for business when they say they will be open. There was a recognition that organizations staffed by volunteers have a problem committing to the hours that they say they will be open.

### **Conclusion:**

The regional participants reinforced the issues that were raised during the November planning session, particularly the concerns they have about staffing, and the importance of volunteers in operating their museum, historical society or library. If the collecting organizations are going to

put more attention to collection care, they are going to have to incorporate volunteers into this effort. Across the regions, most institutions do not have volunteers participate in collection care, because of the knowledge and skill level required. Developing a training program where volunteers can be trained in collection care will likely increase local level collection care.

Many of the concerns that were raised came down to the matter of persuading stakeholders of collection care needs. Whether the meeting participant was a dean/director or a volunteer they expressed frustration at being able to convey the most basic need that the library/museum had for facilities maintenance, technology adoption, and fund raising. Building skills, as well as confidence, and a statewide preservation advocacy initiative were all recommendations that coincided with the statewide plan.

One specific recommendation addressed the need for assistance by museums in acquiring software to support organization of collections. Several museums already use PastPerfect software to manage their analog and digital collections. It was suggested that a statewide license be pursued for Nebraska museums, historical societies, and archives.

This software can support a variety of uses in smaller organizations and now offers a web interface as well as web exhibit support. The Nebraska Museums Association or NSHS could take a lead on this effort.